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tober 17, but does for the constitutional provisions issued just before the meeting of the first Duma.

In foreign politics Witte seems to have regarded England as the natural rival of Russia. For the United States and for President Roosevelt he felt little sympathy, as is evident by his ill-natured remarks about his visit here. The political combination that he would have preferred, and that he thought possible if rightly managed, was an alliance between Russia, Germany, and France; none the less, as soon as he learned the real nature of the Björkö treaty, of which he had approved in ignorance of its contents, he exerted himself strenuously to have it cancelled. Incidentally he claims to have played a decisive part in bringing about the Algeciras Conference and thus settling the first Franco-German Morocco dispute. In the Far East, besides being instrumental in making the Manchurian railway agreement, he founded the Russo-Chinese Bank, which was the chief agent of the aggressive Russian policy of penetration. On the other hand, he condemned the acquisition of Port Arthur both on moral grounds and as leading to the war with Japan; but his own policy toward China had much the same ends in view. If gentler, it was hardly more moral, and was equally likely to alarm the Japanese. In the hour of defeat and the painful negotiations for the Treaty of Portsmouth he showed skill and firmness, even if his triumph was due less to his abilities than to the strong desire of the Japanese to make peace for reasons not then known to him.

When all is said and done, the *Memoirs* of Count Witte are the record of a very remarkable man who, whatever his faults, deserved well of his country and under more favorable circumstances might have ranked among the great statesmen of the age.

ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE.

The Strategy on the Western Front (1914-1918). By HERBERT HOWLAND SARGENT, Lieut.-Col., U. S. A., retired. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company. 1920. Pp. vi, 263. \$2.50.)

THE author, who had retired from the army in 1911, was recalled to active service in 1917 and attached to the War Department General Staff. As one of the group detailed to study the progress of the war and advise the War Department in strategy and kindred matters, it is evident that he enjoyed exceptional opportunities for a detailed and progressive examination of the situation on all fronts.

In memoranda prepared during the war for the information of the Chief of Staff, Colonel Sargent persisted in the view that the war could not be won on the Western front, and advocated the concentration of a large American army in the Balkans for a deep thrust northwards, to destroy Germany's allies and eventually to compel a decision with Germany on the Eastern front. The book now under review is given over largely to a reiteration and defense of the views set forth in these memoranda.

This contention shakes our confidence in the author's understanding and judgment. It was on the Western front that Germany, strongly reinforced, sought a decision before America could duplicate the British success in raising a large army and placing it on the Continent. Events proved that the Allies, who had no choice but to meet the attack, were none too strong when the successive blows of 1918 came. The decision of the Allies to launch a counter-offensive when the German armies were fairly exhausted was unquestionably good strategy. The need for a timely and powerful counter-offensive could be foreseen by all except those who were willing to concede defeat, and for this operation the Allies needed all the troops America could send overseas. Armistice Day would not have seen two million Americans in Europe if the Balkans had been selected as the field for our main effort. In 1918 the decision lay on the Western front, and luckily this was the flank that America could reach most quickly and with the greatest strength.

So much of Colonel Sargent's book as deals with the advantage of a main American effort in the Balkans is a brief in behalf of his war-time memoranda, rather than an impartial study in the light of established facts, and on that account its value to the military student is seriously impaired.

In the leading chapters Colonel Sargent discusses Germany's "three great mistakes". The alleged mistakes were the decision to attack France first, in 1914, the offensive on the Western front in 1916, and the final offensive in the spring of 1918. In each instance the author contends that Germany's proper field of effort at the time lay on the Eastern front. His reasons are wholly inadequate. It is difficult, for example, to credit his assertion that Great Britain would have remained neutral if Germany merely had stood on the defensive on her western frontier in 1914, and had concentrated to destroy her enemies in the East, leaving France to be disposed of later. Competent French, British, and American military minds are substantially agreed that the three offensives were sound in conception and purpose. Failure in execution is not the final test.

In spite of the advantages that the author enjoyed during the war, it must be said that he appears to be uninformed and biased. There is no justification for his sweeping condemnation of Allied and German strategy. One receives the impression that Colonel Sargent is learned in books on strategy, but lacks the information, imagination, and judgment of an instructive critic. His book is a collection of revised memoranda and magazine articles, of limited value or interest to the student of history or strategy.

A. W. B.